

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 5 are amended, claim 2 is canceled, and new claims 13-20 are added. Accordingly, claims 1 and 3-20 are pending in this application. The added claims reflect subject matter that was recited in the original claims. Thus, no new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 3 and 10 contain allowable subject matter. New independent claims 15 and 18 correspond to original claims 3 and 10, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 15-20 are allowable.

The objection to claims 3 and 10 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim is respectfully requested upon allowance of independent claim 1 from which they depend.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claim 5 is amended to recite that the contact portions are configured to facilitate coolant flow across the entrant surface through the paths. As such, the language regarding "other shapes" is removed from claim 5. Although claim 5 still encompasses contact portions that have any shape configured to facilitate coolant flow across the entrant surface through the paths, Applicants respectfully submit that this breadth does not render the claim indefinite as the language does not encompass contact portions with shapes that do not facilitate coolant flow across the entrant surface through the paths. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 5 is definite and fully complies with 35 U.S.C. §112. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 2,656,147 to Brownhill et al. (Brownhill). This rejection is moot with respect to canceled claim 2 and is respectfully traversed with respect to the remaining claims.

Independent claim 1 recites a damper seal for vibration control, the seal comprising an entrant surface for close association with an aperture in a mounting platform for components, the entrant surface having contact portions to engage the aperture to allow vibrational coupling therebetween and recessed paths to allow coolant flow about those contact portions across the entrant surface, the paths being both angled and staggered relative to one another, the paths being formed by direct channels or grooves that extend across the entrant surface. Applicants respectfully submit that Brownhill does not disclose, teach or suggest these claimed features.

Brownhill discloses gas turbine rotors that are cooled via a passage between blade platforms and independent platforms located between the blade platforms of adjacent blade rings. (Col. 1, lns. 14-25.) However, Brownhill is completely unrelated to vibration control and does not disclose a damper seal as recited in claim 1. In fact, Brownhill does not disclose a damper seal at all.

The Office Action asserts that Brownhill discloses the features recited in claim 1 only with reference to column 1, lines 33-35 and recessed paths 16a, 9b. However, the Office Action does not specifically identify any structure in Brownhill that is alleged to be a damper seal, an entrant surface, contact portions or an aperture. The "locating arrangements" referred to in column 1, lines 33-35, of Brownhill do not provide any disclosure of a particular structure on which the Office Action is relying. As such, the Office Action is factually deficient and does not provide a clear indication of how Brownhill is interpreted to allegedly disclose such features. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Brownhill does not disclose a damper seal comprising an entrant surface having contact portions to engage an aperture as recited in claim 1.

The reference to gap 16a and port 9b by Office Action as "recessed paths" does not remedy the factual deficiency of the rejection. Because the Office Action fails to identify a

damper seal, an entrant surface or contact portions, the assertion that the gap 16a and the port 9b are "both angled and staggered relative to one another" is insufficient to disclose the claimed combination of features. In other words, the cooling flow path provided by the arrangement of port 9b, recess 8b, channels 3 and 4, and gap 16a cannot reasonably be considered to disclose all of the features recited in claim 1 because the cooling flow path does not define a damper seal, an entrant surface or contact portions corresponding to the features recited in claim 1.

Applicants assume that the Office Action is relying on the intermediate pieces 7 of Brownhill to allegedly teach a damper seal. However, Applicants respectfully disagree with such an interpretation because it is not supported by the disclosure of Brownhill. Brownhill does not mention vibration or vibration damping anywhere in its disclosure. The intermediate pieces 7 are not described by Brownhill as being a seal or providing any damping function to constitute a damping seal. Further, the intermediate pieces 7 are not described by Brownhill as providing any vibrational coupling. Applicants respectfully submit that Brownhill is unconcerned with vibration damping and does not therefore provide any disclosure relevant to a damper seal as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over Brownhill. Further, claims 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-12 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 1 from which they depend, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5, 6-8 and 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,156,528 to Bobo. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended to include the features recited in original claim 2, now canceled. Thus, although Bobo relates to vibration damping and discloses a vibration damper, contrary to Brownhill as discussed above, Bobo fails to disclose, teach or suggest the damper seal

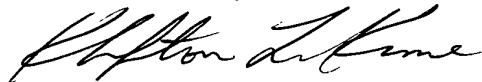
recited in claim 1, as implicitly admitted by the Office Action in not rejecting original claim 2 over Bobo.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over Bobo. Further, claims 5, 6-8 and 11-12 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 1 from which they depend, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 3-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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